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Centex in Minden page 13 Minden memories page 4 Girls' hockey page 11

Winter wonder
A large moose wades through the forest in Algonquin Highlands, presenting a perfect photo capture for local photographer, Tammy Nash. For more wildlife photos from around the area, see inside this edition. /submitted by Tammy Nash

Hawk Lake Log Chute stands the test of time

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

The Hawk Lake log chute remains as a testament to the timber industry of the 1800s. The last of its kind in Ontario, the log chute was invented in 1829 in Quebec to satiate England's hunger for lumber during the Napoleonic Wars.

By 1860, loggers arrived in Haliburton County and began to clear the largest white pine from the forests. By 1880, the largest of the white pines were harvested, with a decline of the timber industry in the 1890s.

The Hawk Lake Log Chute allowed the transportation of timber to the Hawk Lake and Gull River mills. By 1947, the Hodgson-Jones lumber company completed the last log drive, transporting six million board feet to the mill at Hawk Lake.

see LOG CHUTE page 24

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County council hosts last meeting at 11 Newcastle

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

It's official, the Feb. 11 regular meeting of County Council was the last official meeting in the current council chambers, located at 11 Newcastle Street in Minden.

"We're getting into the next phase of the development, where they're going to start working on this building," said County CAO Gary Dyke, "starting with the top floor."

Late last year, County Council approved a recommendation from staff to renovate the Land Registration offices, located at 12 Newcastle Street, to accommodate additional offices and council meeting space. With the current location, council faces accessibility issues, and the utilized space within 11 Newcastle has reached capacity, according to staff.

At the time, the recommendation was met with conflict from a number of County Councillors, who questioned the price tag of $1.3 million to develop new office space. After much debate, the initiative was pushed through, and developments are underway at both sites.

"This will be the last council meeting held in this room," said Dyke during the Feb. 11 meeting, "We're looking to be back in the new facility for our April 22 meeting. Hopefully it will be done the first or second week of April."

Dyke noted that the original proposal for construction presented a lengthy renovation time for both sites, but staff have found efficiencies to streamline the process, bumping up the finish date by two months, finishing completely by September of this year, rather than December.

Council meetings scheduled between now and April will be held virtually. "However, if council would wish to have one in person, that would come at the discretion of the Warden," added Dyke, "and we can make arrangements."

Councillor Walt McKechnie, the deputy mayor for Dysart, noted that he has received questions around the renovations, and inquired whether costs and timelines are aligned with the original proposal.

"It's my understanding that we are actually a little ahead of schedule," answered Dyke. "And we are currently in line with budget … the answer is yes to both of your questions."

Dyke added that reports on the progress - both financial on the physician construction side of it - will be coming to council shortly, to provide members with a detailed update on the developments.

The report from Dyke was received as information. County Council currently meets every second and fourth Wednesday of the month, and all sessions can be viewed online through YouTube.

The council chambers at 11 Newcastle Street in Minden will not be hosting in-person sessions moving forward. Meetings will be held online until the new chambers are available in the spring. /FILE

AMO ready for the next generation

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

With municipal elections officially on the roster for fall of this year, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is putting their best foot forward in an effort to recruit some fresh candidates.

It's no secret that interest in local politics seems to be waning. During the last municipal election, voter turnout was at an all-time low, with only 36 per cent of eligible voters showing up to the polls.

But perhaps the lack of interest in voting came from minimal options presented on the ballot. In 2014 there were 390 acclamations in Ontario, followed by 477 in 2018, and finally, 553 in 2022. "We're trending in all the wrong ways in all these categories," said Christa Lowry, the mayor for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills, and the chair for the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA). "By almost every measure, local democracy isn't where it needs to be for us to be healthy."

With the discouraging numbers presented in the last election, the board of directors for AMO knew something needed to change. "There was a commitment from AMO's reserves to invest one million dollars over the next four years," explained Lowry. She noted that there were three priorities identified: to address the lack of representation, to increase voter turnout, and lastly, to encourage greater civic engagement.

"We wanted to demystify what municipal government does," she said. "Healthy democracy really starts when we realize we need to have everyone's voices heard."

One of the major gaps identified by AMO was the voice of youth. To combat that absence, they have launched a series of workshops dedicated to youth considering running for municipal office. The intention is to discuss what to expect running as a candidate and as a young person, critical strategies for successfully campaigning for municipal office, understanding what it takes to become a candidate, and strategies for engagement, including communication.

Running these sessions are three young professionals who are active in the political scene. Natasha Salonen was elected the first female Mayor of Wilmot Township in October 2022 and, at 27, became the youngest female mayor in Ontario's history. She also sits on the Waterloo Regional Council, and contributes to the Heritage Planning and Active Transportation Advisory Committees.

Natasha Salonen, Aidan Kallioinen, and Cameron Wales will be the presenting speakers at the upcoming workshops dedicated to youth interested in municipal government. All three individuals are well versed and highly experienced in their respective fields. /submitted

> ***"Healthy democracy really starts when we realize we need to have everyone's voices heard ..."***
>
> – Christa Lowry, Rural Ontario Municipal Association Chair

The second speaker is Aidan Kallioinen, who is currently a first-term councillor from the Town of Espanola in Northeastern Ontario. Kallioinen was first elected at the age of 18, making him one of Ontario's youngest elected officials. While he is currently studying journalism at Carleton University in Ottawa, and commuting back and forth to maintain his work in elected office, he got his start in politics by volunteering at the food bank, minor sports, and as a member of the Espanola Lions Club and Espanola Elks Club.

Lastly, AMO will be featuring Cameron Wales, who was first elected to Brockville City Council in 2018 at age 23, and re-elected in 2022. Wales was the chair of the planning and operations committee, and the governance committee, and represented his region on the ROMA board of directors.

Lowry is optimistic about the initiative to engage youth, and is already seeing success in the form of registrations rolling in for the online workshops, scheduled for Feb. 18, March 11, and April 15. All sessions are entirely free, and can be accessed by visiting www.amo.on.ca.

"Time brings experience and wisdom," said Lowry, "but fresh eyes bring a different experience, and it's valuable to have a variety of experience sitting at the table. The health of our democracy is dependent on that."

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Talking politics with Dave Meslin

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Sometimes, you have to start from the ground up in order to make a change.

With a municipal election slotted for this year, the Telling Our Stories Speakers Series, in cooperation with the Haliburton Highlands Healthy Democracy Project and with the support of Places for People, has planned a "pop-up" presentation in advance of this year's municipal election.

> ***"This is a really important year to focus on what's happening locally ... what are the different ways we can make it better?"***
>
> – Author Dave Meslin

The presenting speaker will be Dave Meslin, author of *Teardown: Rebuilding Democracy from The Ground Up*.

Meslin brings 30 years of civic engagement to the table, with experience in both urban and rural settings. In his book, the author dives into what is needed to nurture a healthy democracy, and ensure everyone's voices are heard. In 2024, Meslin hosted *Unrigged*, a six-episode TVO documentary series based on his book, which highlighted strategies and initiatives in all levels of governance to ensure tangible progress.

His TED talk about apathy has more than two million views, and his 90-second video clip from the 2015 Canadian election coverage, using colourful stacks of Lego bricks to explain how our voting system fails us, has over 2.5 million views on Facebook alone.

"This is a really important year to focus on what's happening locally," said Meslin during a recent interview. "What are the different ways we can make it better?"

Between voter turnout and acclamations to positions of power, Meslin noted that those are the two major factors in recognizing if a community is present in their voting process. "With the turnout so low, it's a sign that people don't really know what's happening," he said.

But Meslin stands by the fact that municipal legislation is one of the most important forms of governance. He noted that if the Federal Government stopped working, it would take Canadians days, maybe weeks to notice. If the Provincial Government pushed pause, constituents would notice within a few weeks. "But if the municipality stopped working, you would notice right away," he said.

"There's been so much downloaded to municipalities," Meslin added, noting social services, daycares, policing, libraries, and land use planning are some of the many factors discussed at municipal round tables.

When asked about the potentially muddied waters of a two-tiered system, with local government sitting at both a township and a county level, Meslin was optimistic that it shouldn't confuse voters during the elections process. "We only vote for one level," he clarified, noting that it's the mayors and deputy mayors that then represent each municipality at the county level. No additional votes necessary, but a good reminder to constituents that their vote plays a role at multiple levels of jurisdiction.

Meslin noted that a major difference between individuals running for municipal office is the lack of party alliances. During elections at provincial and federal levels, the parties often decide on the representatives, and all party members are aligned on specific platforms.

At a municipal level, those lines are blurred. "You don't have parties at a local level," said Meslin, "and that changes everything." Individuals are not running on aligned campaigns, rather, they are passionate about projects and initiatives within the communities they are serving. "I think there are institutional barriers," said Meslin. "It's not that they are apathetic, people just may not know how to do it."

/submitted

Meslin was eager to encourage anyone with an interest in learning more about running for government to get involved. "Not in May when the applications open, not in October when the election is happening, but right now," he said. "You have to start this now."

The author and political advocate will be speaking at the Haliburton Fish Hatchery on Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at www.tellingourstories.company.site or by calling 705-457-7557.

Harcourt fire

Kingdon Timber Mart on Chester Crescent in Harcourt caught fire on the evening of Feb. 12. Multiple fire departments were deployed to manage the blaze, which was noted to be under control later in the evening. Marketing manager for the location, Alex Banelopoulous noted that while they are waiting on more details such as cause of fire and timing, operations will be continuing through the Gooderham location. She shared that the townships were working diligently to deliver sand and salt to prevent the water from freezing, and the only injury was a firefighter who slipped and broke his arm on the ice. With firefighters working together, the lumber yard was saved from the flames, but the retail building has been destroyed. This is a developing story, and more information will be shared in the coming days as it becomes available. /photo from Facebook, cutline by Emily Stonehouse

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A piece of the past with the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Some may say that items hold memories. Tales of the past and experiences gone by.

That's something that Robert Wong, the cultural program coordinator for the Minden Hills Cultural Centre (MHCC), firmly believes.

"There are a lot of studies about how history and culture can be therapeutic," said Wong during a recent interview. "How can you make nostalgia an educational opportunity?"

Wong has been with the MHCC since spring of 2023, when he was in the midst of his Masters in Museum Education.

But prior to his move to Minden, he completed an internship at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax, where he was tasked with sorting duplicate artifacts into themes and collections. He ended up creating boxes that were then used for educational purposes, around the history and background of the area. "It could be personal items, hobbies/recreation/leisure activities, and research on their history and context to come up with points that can spark conversations," said Wong.

Upon starting with the MHCC, Wong brought that idea to life locally with the creation of reminiscence kits. Originally formulated as an extension of his master's program, Wong connected with the long term care unit of Haliburton Highlands Health Services, to offer programming for aging seniors. "Here at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre, I observed that in the winter months, our museum and village are closed, and residents in Haliburton County just don't have access to heritage and culture as much as they do during the summer season," said Wong. "Bringing museum objects to them becomes an obvious option. When we think about accessibility, we often focus on improving access to our buildings, rather than bringing heritage and culture closer to the people themselves."

He was seeking the opportunity to observe cognitive patterns presented by the seniors when they were reconnected with an item of the past. "I am always looking for results," said Wong, "and that drives me to engage with the participants more, to ask questions that are a little more stimulating."

One of the first reminiscence kits Wong brought to a long term care home was from a recent donation of vintage cooking ware. When creating the kits, the cultural coordinator focuses on all five senses; offering opportunities for smell, touch, and sight. "I want to make sure all the senses are fulfilled," he noted. "That's how you link memories, with those senses."

During a recent session, Wong provided an empty tobacco case, and allowed residents to reconnect with the distinct smell and flavour of the set. While many of the participants are experiencing dementia, Wong shared that it's amazing to see how many memories come flooding back when offering a piece of the past.

The last session was held just before Valentine's Day, with an Edwardian wedding dress, a shaving kit, and a series of postcards from the 1940s and 50s. "The residents were really active with this one," said Wong, "They were all engaged in conversation, talking a lot. I wasn't even using my own questions, they were all naturally just engaged."

A glimpse into the recent Valentine's edition of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre's reminiscence kits held in the Minden long term care home. The idea is to see if any pieces of the past can bring back memories from seniors who may have different experiences with the items. /photos submitted

And while the memories floating to the surface may be a warm welcome for many residents, Wong noted that his work at the museum also benefits from the first-hand experiences many are able to provide. "We had one woman share stories about her wedding on a lake, north of Minden," he recalled. "Right in that session, she was able to bring back that memory."

Wong noted that while he has access to photos and artifacts, the real-life stories of locals offer a glimpse into the past that is only available through first-hand accounts, allowing him to connect the dots of days gone by.

There will be other sessions planned for the spring months, including an Easter reminiscence kit, as well as one heading into the summer months. Wong is currently seeking grants to offer the program beyond HHHS, in an effort to welcome more public viewers to the process.

Right, Valentine's cards pulled from the collection of artifacts at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre were used to bring back memories, or allow residents of long term care homes to reconnect with pieces of their past. /submitted

Peer support specialist joins Youth Wellness Hub team

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

A new 2SLGBTQ+ peer support specialist has started at the Haliburton Youth Wellness Hub.

Carl Vossen, a graduate of Trent University's social work program has over five years of experience supporting marginalized youth in Ontario.

Driving two days a week from Peterborough, Vossen will be available to youth that need one-on-one support. Outside of individual sessions, Vossen will provide one-on-one peer support, resources to families, plan activities related to connecting with identity, conduct outreach at the high school, foster community, and offer relationship support.

New to Haliburton, Vossen has been settling in well.

"I think it is really beautiful," they said. "Even noticing Pride flags outside of local businesses, it's really heartening to see that pride and representation out and about in a small town. I know it can feel really isolating and lonely as a queer person in rural areas."

A cat parent, collage artist, avid reader, and VHS tape collector, Vossen says they were drawn to peer support due to its flexibility in supporting mental health and their personal drive to support 2SLGBTQ+ youth in rural communities.

"My number one goal is to increase opportunities for connection for 2SLGBTQS+ youth in Haliburton County," said Vossen. "To help youth feel less alone and to understand that their world can expand beyond their experience of the here and now."

Vossen says that in their position, they hope to be the person that they needed while growing up trans in a rural community. A space like the Youth Wellness Hub would have been life changing for them.

A new position to the Youth Wellness Hub, the peer support program is going to be built from scratch. As the work continues, Vossen will ask the youth what they are needing from the support specialist position.

"I can't do this work without youth input," said Vossen "I can't offer relevant services if I'm not in tune with the needs of the community."

With five years of experience in peer support, Vossen is no stranger to trailblazing their own 2SLGBTQ+ peer outreach program, improvising access for trans youth to receive gender affirming care, and improving quality of service in rural communities.

"It feels like this role was meant for me," said Vossen. "It is directly in line for what I am meant to be doing and I can make a difference here."

Mary Sisson, manager of the Haliburton Youth Wellness Hub says that the youth that visit the hub have been expressing the need for 2SLGBTQ+ in-person peer support for quite some time.

"It feels like home," said Vossen.

Currently, the Wellness Hub has Lindsay Meller, a nurse practitioner capable of offering gender affirming care, and Cicily Cooper, a new addition to the Haliburton Highlands Family Health , who is a practitioner that is committed to offering gender affirming care to the community.

Youth that grow up trans and gender nonforming in rural communities need to seek care in large urban areas. This involved several hurdles for youth including transportation, leaving their home support community, and long time expenditures. Rural doctors often are not aware of the resources or understand what is involved with

see INCLUSIVITY page 14

Huskies in new hands

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

A recent game the Huskies hosted on home ice. The team is currently holding the fifth position in the Eastern Conference. /TIM YANO staff

It's the dawn of a new day for the Haliburton County Huskies, as longtime owner and founding figure Paul Wilson hands over the reins to head coach of the team, Ryan Ramsay.

"I'm still actively involved," said Wilson during a recent interview, "but I'm getting older. I need an exit plan."

The team came to the area five years ago, and has taken the region by storm with merchandise, community events, and sold-out games. The Ontario Junior Hockey League team is currently holding the fifth position in the East Conference, trailing by just a few points from the top three teams. With the playoffs looking promising for next month, Wilson feels as though he's done his time in putting the team on the map.

"Several months ago, I did make the public announcement that I was looking to sell the team if the right person came along," confirmed Wilson, and noted that two interested parties came forward. The only issue: they would have taken the Huskies out of Haliburton.

"The price wasn't the issue," he said. "It's that they wanted to move the team, so I basically broke off negotiations with both those groups. My main objective is to keep the team here."

Wilson has poured his heart, soul, and wallet into keeping the team afloat locally. He secures all sponsors, ads, game day banners, programs, season's tickets, and stocks the bars on game days, to name a few items. He has also doled out $150,000 on the team's locker room at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena, and $20,000 installing drink rails in the rink. It's a passion project for him, but one that is starting to take its toll.

"This is my fifth year at this," he said, "and we've lost money every year."

This is where Ryan Ramsay comes into the picture. Ramsay is the head coach and general manager of the Haliburton County Huskies, and has been working as the development coach for the Peterborough Petes this season. He has decades of experience in professional hockey, and has worked with players through all ages and stages of their careers.

In 2021, Ramsay moved with his family to the area permanently, to focus on growing the team here in Haliburton. And as of next season, he will be stepping into the role of owner for the Huskies. "I am confident that between Ryan and I," said Wilson, "we can make this work. I'm confident that we can make the business at least break even. That's the difference now: it's Ryan's team now."

Wilson credits the support of local businesses for the success of the team settling into the area. "We get a lot of money from the community, sponsorship wise," he said, noting 13 to 14 major sponsors who are committed to the team, year over year. Wilson also has a seven-year agreement in place with the Township of Minden Hills, securing their time slot for practices, and subsidizing some costs for rentals. While that agreement is heading into its last year, he is confident that they will be able to secure further support from the township as the team looks ahead.

"I don't want to just bail," said Wilson, reflecting on his role with the organization. "I want to make this transition work, and turn more over to other people."

With interest in the team at what Wilson refers to as "an all-time high," he is hopeful about the team sticking to its roots in the Haliburton Highlands. He noted a number of sold-out games, with options to view the games online as well. "We're thankful for the support following everything," said Wilson. "It's as good as it's ever been."

The transition of ownership from Wilson to Ramsay will be finalized by the 2026-2027 season. The last regular game for the Haliburton Huskies this season is Feb. 28, with playoffs kicking off shortly after.

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Fresh

Editorial

Emily Stonehouse

IT'S FINALLY happening. We are officially in a municipal election year here in the Haliburton Highlands.

Some may say it's been a long time coming, but it's amazing how fast four years can fly by.

With our last election in 2022, there's been a number of highs and lows, ups and downs over the seasons.

Our elected officials have been thrown a major ice storm, unprecedented weather patterns, multiple elections in varying positions of power outside our own corners, changing legislation, and a whole lot of deer in town.

And their terms aren't over yet.

But that doesn't mean we can't look ahead.

I've been impressed with the amount of buzz around this election already, with a particular interest in wrangling young professionals into the ring. It's an ever-changing world, and the folks that seem to keep up with that pace tend to have fewer rings around the tree trunk.

That's not to say that the many representatives who have dedicated years to their positions haven't made an impact. This community is what it is based on the people who have poured their lives into it. For better or for worse.

But we are well overdue for some fresh faces at the party.

And while that may seem like a necessary step in implementing something that resembles actual change into the cobwebby corners of our communities, it comes with a flash of obstacles in the path.

It's no secret that these municipal positions pay next to nothing. And while it's marketed as a part-time gig, we all know it's not a job, it's a lifestyle. Gone are the days of anonymity in the grocery store, or blissful unawareness around the tendering processes.

That makes it tricky for young people to get their foot in the door. We still have mortgages, student debt, and savings for our kids in an effort for them to ease into the loan system more smoothly than our generation.

And speaking of kids, we are in an era where their little lives have been put on the forefront. And rightfully so. There is significantly increased presence from both moms and dads, and on the flip side, a waitlist for childcare that spans years.

And trust me, kids and council chambers don't always mix.

So maybe we change the mindset of what our expectations are for our elected officials if we want to see these fresh faces. Provide a wage that at least scrapes the surface of the cost of living, recognize that day-time meetings and ongoing time in the spotlight could be detrimental to both working adults and parents, and create opportunities where equity is sought and prioritized, rather than pushed aside with the words; 'this is how it's always been done.'

Because it's time for a change. It's time to get involved. It's time to allow a space for different voices to come together, representing different needs, different interests, and different experiences. It's time to work towards the future while appreciating the past, mapping out a little corner of the world where our kids should be proud to grow up.

So now's the time to make a difference, and welcome some fresh faces to the table.

Maiden, mother, crone redux

Pair, Ponder

Poke, Peel

fay martin

WE, AS a species that hopes to continue to exist, require women to become mothers. But it seems we have always made that difficult.

Rebecca Mead, in *'How Should a Mother Be?'* (*New Yorker*, Jan 26/26) reviews a history of the 'external factors in the culture [that] make being a good mother a timeless imperative – one that's endlessly demanded yet impossible to achieve'. The factors change – from the probability of death in childbirth until not so long ago, to the impossibility of excelling in the 'intensive, intentional parenting' currently required while building and sustaining a stellar career, all in the absence of adequate public childcare.

No wonder young women who have a choice (which in theory but not in reality they all do) are opting out of motherhood.

In fact, every stage of being a woman is made impossibly difficult by societal expectations. It's almost as if keeping women down is necessary for lifting men up. (And I understand, as much as I can as a woman, the genesis of that feeling, because in most persevering species, the role of the male is unapologetically minute and momentary. Still, one hopes for a more evolved perspective.)

Let us briefly review how the bar for females doing life right at every stage is structurally challenging.

Maiden: One must be attractive but not a temptress. One must be intelligent and competent but not supplant males. One must be emotionally supportive but not create dependency.

Mother: One must be 'good enough' but the expectation is endlessly mutable and malleable, defined by race and ethnicity, differentially accessible by class.

Choosing not to be, or being unable to be, a mother is potentially a crime on its own merit. I recall a client, in tears, saying her culture called her a 'mule' because she was barren. We recall the wives of Henry VIII being dispatched because they did not produce a male heir, whereas it was the quality of Henry's sperm that explained the problem.

Pregnancy can render a woman a fragile porcelain creature who must be protected from living her life, a depersonalized baby-making machine, and everything in between.

(For example, my doctoral research respondents, kids who became legally 'independent' when they aged out of the child welfare system at 18, talked a lot about parenting. The girls reported that pregnancy gave them otherwise unavailable status and resources - and intensified surveillance, proof that they were being cared for so that their baby, which was likely to be apprehended at birth, could get 'a good start in life'. The boys were chastised for not 'keeping their pecker in their pants' and threatened with having to reimburse the state for supporting the mother of their child.)

Mead, in her article, references Pliny of ancient Rome, where the (male-authored) literature describes the expertise of midwifery as unlimited power, which was meant as a warning, not a complement. I see scary parallels with the modern medicalization of childbirth, where it seemed a good idea for women wracked by contractions to lie prone with her feet in stirrups, vagina at easy eye-height for the attending physician, scalpel in hand to perform a preventive episiotomy so that the stitching up of vaginal tears could be neat 'embroidery' (an ob-gyn actually said that to me!).

Okay, so procreation is inevitably gendered, and as such, a hotbed for politics. Surely menopause offers relief from the wars?

Crone: I accomplished (ha!) menopause fairly early and easily and thereafter took evil pleasure in horrifying women friends by quantifying the amount of time that returned to a woman's life when she no longer has to worry about menstruation: the several days per month of actually bleeding, the days leading up to and out of that time, the hours worrying about having or not having a period, the cost of the paraphernalia. (I didn't even know about the pink tax then.)

Just recently I learned that many young women are choosing birth control that eliminates menstruation, and part of me says, good for them, beating crone-dom to the punch. But another part of me grieves this distancing from the body, this addition of yet another decision over-riding nature. When should one want menopause to take place? What if the answer is never? HRT to the grave? No wonder there's such a whoopla about menopause at the moment – it just became another stage of life for women to do 'it' right!

What I wanted to say about crone-dom is that I think it has become, potentially, a reiteration of motherhood. The expectation that, if you're still relatively hale and hearty, you subsidize the un-achievable expectations of modern parenting by active grand-parenting, and/or in your spare time, subsidize the inadequacies of the health system to manage elders whose care needs are sadly neglected. Next column, readers.

points of view

Hop dogs

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

WINTER IS NOT the easiest time for a dog. It's not that they don't enjoy the snow and cooler temperatures. Or even collecting snowballs in their coat. Because, if my dog is any indication, they really do.

No, the problem with winter for dogs is that eventually they don't run on all cylinders. For those unversed in the mechanics of our canine friends, permit me to explain.

The typical dog runs on four cylinders, also known as legs.

There will be a time in winter – generally when temperatures plummet – when your dog will lose the use of at least one cylinder.

This happened to my pup Rosie this morning. As a result, despite her protests, I had to end our walk early so that the problem didn't get worse.

This kind of thing is old hat to experienced dog owners, but it occurs to me that recognizing the symptoms might not be so obvious for new dog owners. That's why I am going to explain the telltale signs that will let you know your dog is experiencing these issues.

Let's begin with the most common one.

If your dog is walking on two hind legs and one forward leg, it is easy to assume your dog is perpetually on point. When this occurs, you need to ask yourself: Is my dog a pointer? If not, it has very likely blown a front cylinder. If your pup is a pointing dog, however, it is probably experiencing brain freeze – which is also reason to get it back to the warmth of your house.

Rear leg issues are a little more complicated, unless you have a male dog. In that case, you'll know it blew a rear cylinder when he tried to lift the other leg to pee.

No matter which foot is out of commission, your dog is going to give you a look that says, "We don't have to go back. I am still working with 50 per cent more legs than you."

This is a compelling argument.

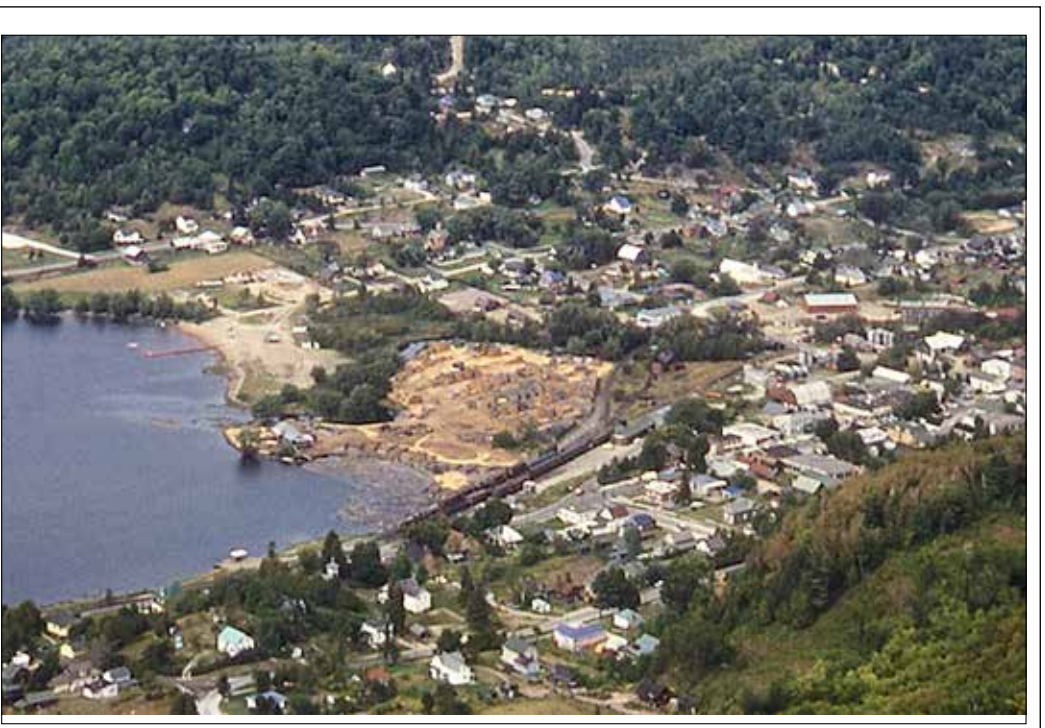
Things get a little iffier when your dog is walking on two legs though. For instance, if both legs are on one side, they will be walking in circles. Otherwise, they will be hopping like Pepe LePew – which, in this Me-Too era, is not a good look.

The real danger is when both front paws are out of commission. That's because your immediate thought – and you can't be blamed for this – is that you are witnessing a historic stage in canine evolution when they finally become bipedal. This is not the case. Trust me.

Lastly, when a dog is reduced to hopping on one leg, there's generally no question what you are looking at, unless your dog acts like a pogo stick to begin with. The only question, in fact, is how you got to be so oblivious as to let it get this far.

Sure, there's a good argument to be made for the viral social media potential of such an occurrence. Again, however, it's best to get your dog inside quickly.

My point is most dogs would prefer if you let their walk continue right until they have no more feet left to use. At that point, they will concede defeat and give you a sad look that indicates they actually want to end the walk. Of course, it's best never to let it get that far. Because, honestly, after that, the walk becomes a total drag.



pic *of the* past

Haliburton looked much different in 1960. In this photo by Bob and Cathy Haskill of Mississauga, you can see Head Lake Park as a sawmill; the train station; the old arena and GM dealership on Highland Street. /FILE

Walk for Peace

Tales from the great Green meadow

Lynda Shadbolt

"WE DON'T HAVE to be loud to be heard." In a world filled with noise - loud headlines, clashing opinions, and constant digital noise - this simple truth feels almost radical. Yet for 108 days, nineteen venerable monks demonstrated its power in the most humble way possible: by walking.

They walked for more than 2,300 miles from Fort Worth, Texas to Washington, D.C., covering 20 to 30 miles each day. Beside them was their faithful dog, Aloka. There were no protest signs, no chants, no demands for attention. Their pilgrimage was quiet, steady, and intentional. With every step, they spread peace - not through force or volume, but through presence.

Their walk was a living reminder that "peace is not imposed by power, but cultivated through mindfulness, compassion, sacrifice, and unwavering determination". In Buddhist philosophy, loving-kindness (Metta) and non-harming (Ahimsa) are foundational principles. Yet these values are not confined to any one religion or tradition; they are timeless and universal.

The monks embodied these teachings, showing that peace begins within the individual heart before it can ever transform a community or a nation. It would have been easy for the monks to want recognition or organize dramatic demonstrations. Instead, they chose a quieter path. Their silence spoke volumes. As they passed through towns, cities, and rural highways, people noticed. Some joined them for a few miles. Others offered water, meals, or words of encouragement. Many simply paused to reflect. The monks' presence created ripples - small, personal understandings that rippled outward in ways impossible to measure.

Peace is often imagined as a political achievement; negotiated in conference rooms or enforced by treaties. But the monks' journey revealed a deeper truth: lasting peace is cultivated one person at a time. It begins when an individual chooses patience over anger, understanding over judgment, kindness over indifference. Each choice may seem small, but collectively they shape the moral fabric of society.

Walking 20 to 30 miles a day requires discipline and resilience. Over 108 days, fatigue and discomfort were their constant companions. Yet the monks continued, step after deliberate step. Their perseverance illustrated that peace is not passive. It demands sacrifice and commitment. It requires individuals willing to embody the change they wish to see, even when the path is long and the outcome uncertain.

Every day of their journey, they reminded those who followed them that peace does not arrive all at once. It grows through daily practice - through mindful breathing, compassionate listening, and acts of generosity. One peaceful person has the potential to inspire another and in this way, peace spreads quietly but powerfully. The monks' pilgrimage concluded in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 11 but its message continues. They showed us that we do not need to be loud to be heard. A calm presence, lived consistently and authentically, can move mountains of fear and division.

The Times MINDEN ONTARIO
THE ECHO HALIBURTON COUNTY

Editor's notes

Our team was recently recognized on a provincial level, with a number of nods through the Ontario Community Newspaper Awards. *The Haliburton County Echo* was nominated for General Excellence, and the *Minden Times* received an honourable mention in the same category.

Our writers were also acknowledged in the categories of best heritage feature, best news story, best rural news story, and humour columnist of the year.

Congratulations to our team, as well as our fellow community newspaper, *The Highlander,* for their well-deserved accolades.

For the full listing of local nominations, visit www.ocna.org.

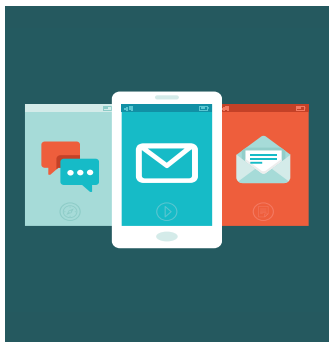
Please note that this edition of the newspaper was produced on Friday, Feb. 13 to accommodate press closures on Family Day. All events and news stories that occurred over the past weekend will be featured in next week's papers. Thank you for your understanding.

Letter to the editor

Dear Editor,

I'd like to thank Thomas, from the *Times*, for taking the time to interview me leading up to my 100th birthday celebration. Almost 250 friends and family attended, and I was overwhelmed with love and best wishes and some gifts that I don't have the foggiest notion to whom to send a thank you note! It took until 10:30 p.m. to open all the cards and I had the best, longest sleep ever! Thanks to my daughter Lois for organizing this and to all of those friends who lent a hand in small and big ways on my special day. Thanks to all those who came to celebrate with me. And thank you, Emily, for running the edited story the following week with the detailed corrections. Much appreciated.

Ruth MacBrien,
Minden



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
emily@haliburtonpress.com

OPP warns public of rising trend in police impersonation scams

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is alerting residents across the region to an emerging scam trend involving suspects who pose as police officers to defraud victims of substantial amounts of money.

In recent reports, fraudsters have contacted victims by phone while claiming to be members of the OPP. In each case, the suspect used fabricated names, titles, and badge information to gain credibility. Victims were instructed to withdraw large sums of money and either send the funds through cryptocurrency platforms or hand over cash directly. These tactics resulted in significant financial losses, including incidents where victims paid between $6,000 and $13,000 to individuals falsely claiming to be officers.

Police confirm that the names and ranks provided by the scammers do not correspond with any OPP members. Fraudsters often use urgency, intimidation, and fear to pressure victims into complying with their demands.

Protect Yourself Against Police Impersonation Scams. The OPP is reminding the public of the following fraud prevention strategies:

- Police will never request money, cryptocurrency, gift cards, or financial transfers over the phone.
- Police will never demand immediate payment, threaten arrest, or pressure you to act urgently.
- Do not provide personal information, banking details, PINs, or identification numbers to unsolicited callers.
- Pause and talk to a trusted family member or friend before making any financial decision under pressure.

Verify or Report Through the OPP Non Emergency Line

If you receive a call from someone claiming to be an OPP officer and you are unsure of its legitimacy, you can contact the OPP non emergency line at 1-888-310-1122.

This number can be used to:

- Confirm whether an officer has attempted to contact you
- Report suspicious calls or attempted frauds
- Speak directly with police about fraud related concerns

Residents who have been targeted or victimized by fraud are encouraged to contact police and report the incident to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at -888-495-8501 or online at www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca.

The OPP continues to monitor fraud trends and reminds community members that awareness is one of the strongest tools against financial victimization.

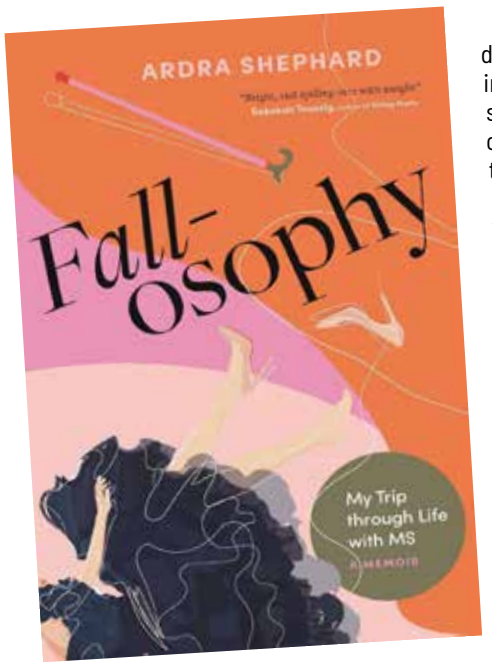
Submitted

Minden Memories

This 1916 photograph shows students and their teacher, Miss Bray, outside the Red School in Lutterworth Township. From the John Hulbig collection, it offers a glimpse into early school life in the county. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week



At twenty-three, Ardra Shephard is drifting through her twenties - dating the wrong guy, overspending on shoes, and dreaming of becoming an opera singer. She assumes there's time to figure things out - until a doctor diagnoses her with MS, dividing her life into Before and After. As the disease progresses, Ardra confronts fear, loss of mobility, and profound feelings of otherness. Yet as her worst-case scenarios unfold, she discovers an unexpected truth: disability is not a tragedy, and a difficult life can still be rich with joy, agency, and self-worth.

Fallosophy by Ardra Shephard is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library. Visit haliburtonlibrary.ca to place a hold or learn more.

Haliburton Fish by Karen Gervais. Gervais has been painting, running, cycling, skiing and enjoying art in the wilds of Haliburton for the last 20 years. She teaches art at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School and encourages students to be active and enjoy the outdoors through her coaching pursuits in cross-country running, Nordic skiing and track and field. She is a mother, cat-lover and frequent visitor of the Sculpture Forest and Glebe Park. /submitted

Ethereal Forest by Wendy Wood. Wood has been creating art all her life. She started out as an electrical draftsperson and the love of using a pencil led to a career in landscape painting. She was introduced to crochet at a very young age and that appreciation of fiber crept back into her life in woven form. Living in the Haliburton Highlands for over 20 years has proven to be a never-ending source of artistic inspiration. /submitted

Eyesore to beauty: Utility boxes transformed into masterpieces

ADAM FRISK

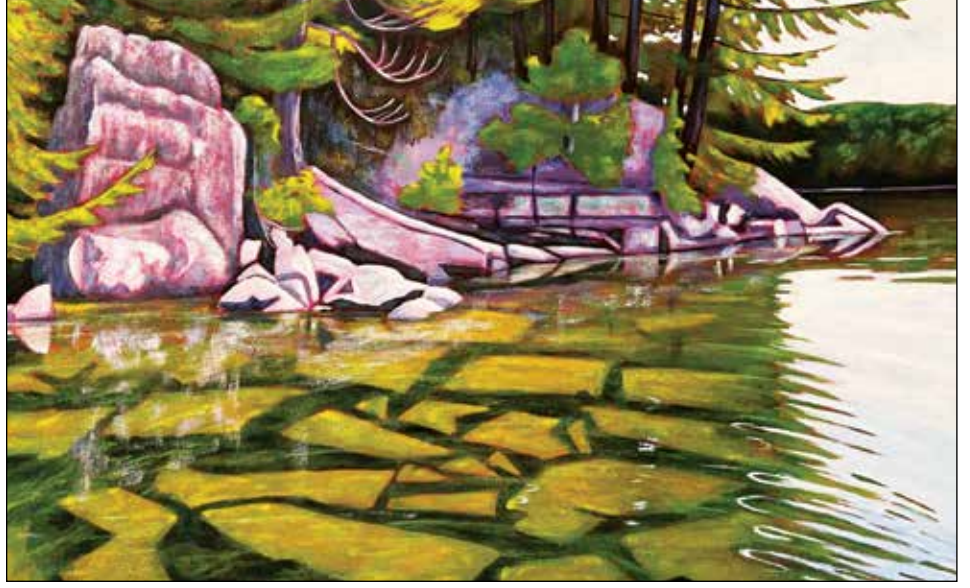
Journalist

Those utility control boxes that we usually walk past without a second glance may have some people stopping and taking a second look, thanks to an initiative by the Cultural Resources Committee of Dysart et al, which saw these industrial eyesores transformed into works of art.

The project is the latest in a string of community-driven efforts to weave art into the fabric of daily life. Jim Blake, curator of the Haliburton Sculpture Forest and a member of the municipality's Cultural Resources Committee, explained the idea of using these sewage pump station control boxes as metal canvases.

"Over the years, some of these control boxes have been replaced while others have started rusting after a number of years," he said in a recent telephone interview. "I've driven past the large one near Whispering Pines that is rusting and said to myself, 'It's too bad that it isn't more attractive.'"

Blake went on to explain that he had noticed several other communities had hired artists to create work to cover these types of utility boxes. So from there, the committee launched a "call to artists" last year for a chance to have their art featured on a control box.



Sherborne Lake Rocks Under Water by Susan Hay. Hay is a landscape artist, living in Haliburton County. Her training as an artist began when she taught herself to paint using Walter Foster "How to Paint" books. She eventually took courses at the Haliburton College of Art and Design. She has been devoting much of the past 25 years to painting. She is a member of The Studio Tour, Haliburton Highlands and exhibits her work at the Rails End Gallery in Haliburton. Susan's landscapes are painted on texturized canvases and are mostly based on photos she has taken from the bow of her canoe. /submitted

Sumac by Al Van Mil. Van Mil was born on the Isle of Texel, in the North Sea of the Netherlands. His grew up in a scholarly and artistic family. For most of the last 50 years, Al Van Mil has created visual artworks using a large variety of media, including acrylic or oil paint on large canvases. He spent his high school years in Haliburton. Al and his wife and fellow artist Annette Blady own a home on Miskwabi Lake in Haliburton County and are long-time participants in the Studio Tour - Haliburton Highlands. /submitted

The response from the creative community was overwhelming. The committee received 40 submissions from 25 local artists, with a jury selecting the finalists.

"The delightful thing was how many different artists submitted to this," Blake said. "It was just fabulous to see the variety of work."

The artwork of Susan Hay, Al Van Mil, Karen Gervais, and Wendy Wood was selected to be featured on the control boxes throughout the municipality.

The transformation isn't just a coat of paint. The municipality partnered with a specialized vinyl-wrapping company near Lindsay, Ont., to ensure the art can withstand the Haliburton climate.

These high-tech wraps are designed to last five to seven years, featuring UV protection and the ability to be removed or replaced without damaging the integrity of the control boxes.

The project was made possible through funding from private donors, the municipality, and the County of Haliburton tourism department. All images on the boxes are included in this article, with a brief outline of the artist, and some background on their styles.

Red Hawks

Ski skills

COSSA Nordic was held at Glebe Park on Wednesday, Feb. 11, and welcomed schools from all over the region to participate.
The Novice/Elementary skiers started the day with the interval races approximately three, five and seven kilometres respectively. Relays then started at 1:30 in the afternoon in the stadium area. Red Hawks are the skiers in the black and red uniforms, and performed well in the snowy conditions. /ADAM FRISK staff

Red Hawks

The Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Red Hawks Girls' Hockey team hosted their first tournament on home ice this past week. While the team is a combination of some players with experience and some fresh to the ice, the team worked well together to secure one win and two losses over the course of the day. The tournament follows a cancelled tournament earlier in the year due to an inclement weather day. /ADAM FRISK staff

Notice
(Applicant – Van Leeuwen)

In the matter of the *Municipal Act* and in the matter of a proposed By-law of the Corporation of the Municipality of Highlands East to close, stop-up and convey certain portions of a Shore Road Allowance along the shore of **Koshlong Lake**, more particularly hereinafter described.

Notice Is Hereby Given, pursuant to the Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, and the Municipal Procedures, that the Township Council of The Corporation of the Municipality of Highlands East proposes to consider and if deemed advisable, to pass at a virtual meeting on **Tuesday, March 10th, 2026** 9:30 a.m., a By-Law to close, stop-up and convey to the adjacent land owners the following described lands:

Firstly: Part of Lot 12, Concession 15, Township of Glamorgan, Municipality of Highlands East, County of Haliburton, shown as Part 1 on Plan of Survey 19R-11193, made by **Bishop Geyer Surveying Inc. completed May 26, 2025.**

Secondly: Part of the Original Shore Road Allowance in Front of Lot 12, Concession 15, Township of Glamorgan, Municipality of Highlands East, County of Haliburton, shown as Parts 2 and 3 on Plan of Survey 19R-11193, made by **Bishop Geyer Surveying Inc. completed May 26, 2025**. *(Part 3 being the flooded portion to be retained by the Municipality of Highlands East).*

The Plan of Survey 19R-11193 is available to you for inspection by you making an appointment at the Municipality of Highlands East offices, Wilberforce, Ontario.

The above-described lands, by resolution, have been declared to be surplus. If you wish to attend the virtual meeting, please call or e-mail the Municipal Clerk prior to the day of the public meeting so you can be provided with a link or phone number for the meeting. If you do not have the capability to attend a virtual meeting, please provide written comments to the Municipal Clerk prior to the public meeting.

Any person or his or her counsel, solicitor or agent who attends the virtual meeting shall be afforded an opportunity to make representations in respect of the within matter.

And Take Further Notice that if the public wishes to participate regarding the purchase of Shoreline Road Allowance please contact the Municipal Clerk.

Dated at the Municipality of Highlands East, Wilberforce, Ontario this 10th day of February, 2026.

Robyn Rogers, Municipal Clerk
Box 295, 2249 Loop Road,
WILBERFORCE, ON K0L 3C0
rrogers@highlandseast.ca
(705) 448-2981

THE TOWNSHIP OF
MINDEN HILLS
IN SEASON, EVERY SEASON

Notice of a Public Meeting
Concerning Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments
Township of Minden Hills

Take Notice that pursuant to Sections 16 and 34 of the Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990, as amended, the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills will hold a Public Meeting for both Township initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, which have application to those lands located within Municipal Well Systems and Municipal Surface Water Systems in the Township of Minden Hills, more specifically being vulnerable areas as identified in the regional Source Protection Plan, within Minden, Lutterworth Pines and Kinmount. Please refer to the key maps below.

Purpose and Effect: The proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments if approved will serve to introduce policies and provisions with respect to Source Water Protection as required under the Clean Water Act, 2006. Official Plan policies will identify land use activities that represent drinking water threats and will therefore be prohibited in the absence of a prescribed instrument or Section 59 Notice from the Township's Risk Management Official. Policies will also guide the use of sewage systems, road salt, transport pathways and stormwater management facilities. Zoning By-law regulations will support the Official Plan policies and identify those uses which will require further review and approval within vulnerable areas.

And Take Notice that the Township of Minden Hills will be holding a Public Meeting, as required under the Planning Act. The Public Meeting is an opportunity for Council to hear and consider comments related to the proposed amendments. Any member of the public may speak in favour, or opposition to, the proposed amendments during the Public Meeting.

Date and Location of Public Meeting
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026
Time: 9:00 AM
Location: This will be a hybrid meeting. Members of the public may attend either in person or virtually via Zoom. Details are provided below.

To Watch: Members of the Public wishing to watch the meeting in person can do so by attending the Township Council Chambers, located at 7 Milne Street, Minden. Members of the Public wishing to watch the meeting virtually can do so by joining the Meeting Live Stream Link available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@townshipofmindenhills4716

To Participate in Person: Members of the public wishing to participate and make comment or speak at the Public Meeting must: pre-register by emailing admin@mindenhills.ca by Wednesday, March 11th before 4:00 PM or by attending and registering the morning of the meeting before 8:30 AM in the Township Council Chambers, 7 Milne Street, Minden.

To Participate via Zoom on the Web or by Telephone please email admin@mindenhills.ca by **Wednesday, March 11th before 4:00 PM** to obtain login information. **If attending virtually, please log-on 30 minutes before the meeting.**

Written Submissions either in support of or opposition to the application must be received prior to the Public Meeting and can be submitted to adougherty@mindenhills.ca

Please Note: We encourage those wishing to view the meeting to also download the agenda, as it will not be displayed during the streaming process**. Meeting agendas can be downloaded by visiting** the Township website at: https://www.mindenhills.ca/council/

Please note the live-stream link provided for each meeting will only be activated while Council is in session.

Additional Information regarding the proposed Amendments is available to the public for inspection at the Municipal Office located at 7 Milne Street by appointment and will be available online by visiting www.mindenhills.ca/news/. For more information about this matter, contact the undersigned at adougherty@mindenhills.ca or by phone at 705-286-1260 (ext. 506).

Any Person may attend the public meeting and/or make written or verbal representation either in support of or in opposition to the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments.

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township of Minden Hills before the proposed official plan amendment is adopted or the by-law with respect to the zoning by-law amendment is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills before the proposed official plan amendment is adopted or the by-law with respect to the zoning by-law amendment is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If You Wish to Be Notified of the decision of the Township of Minden Hills in respect to the proposed amendments, you must submit a written request to the Township of Minden Hills. For more information about this matter, including information about preserving your appeal rights, contact the undersigned at adougherty@mindenhills.ca

Accessibility: The Township of Minden Hills is committed to providing services as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. If you have accessibility needs and require alternative formats or other accommodations, please contact the undersigned.

Privacy Disclosure: As one of the purposes of the Planning Act is to provide for planning processes that are open and accessible, all written submissions, documents, correspondence, e-mails or other communications (including your name and address) form part of the public record and may be disclosed/made available by the Township as deemed appropriate, including anyone requesting such information. Please note that by submitting any of this information, you are providing the Township with your consent to use and disclose this information as part of the planning process.

Dated this 17th day of February 2026
Amanda Dougherty, Manager of Planning
Township of Minden Hills
7 Milne Street, P.O. Box 359 Minden, ON K0M 2K0

This winter has been wild with wild life, as snowy days and cold temperatures have driven critters into the spotlight. Pictured is a white tailed deer visitor by Debi Ireland.

Blue Jay by Tammy Nash

Red squirrel by Tammy Nash

2026 Municipal Election

Joint Compliance Audit Committee Members

The Corporations of the Township of Algonquin Highlands, the Township of Minden Hills, the Municipality of Dysart et al and the Municipality of Highlands East, are currently seeking interested applicants from professionals who are required to adhere to codes of standards of their profession, and other individuals with in depth knowledge of the campaign financing rules of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* for appointment to a **Joint Compliance Audit Committee.**

The Joint Compliance Audit Committee has full delegation of the authority in the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, to address applications requesting an audit of a candidate's election campaign finances. This authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Review applications and grant or reject audit requests
- Where an audit is granted, appoint an auditor and review the audit report
- Where indicated, decide whether legal proceedings shall be commenced.

The Joint Compliance Audit Committee will consist of members appointed by each Council. Committee members must have the ability to understand and apply the election campaign finance provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and should be considered impartial with respect to their ability to fulfill their responsibilities. Preference shall be given to candidates that have applicable experience in accounting, law, law enforcement and academics from related fields.

Preferred Qualifications:
(a) Accounting and audit – accountants or auditors with experience in preparing or auditing the financial statements of municipal candidates;
(b) Academic – college or university professors with expertise in political science or local overnment administration;
(c) Legal; and
(d) Other individuals with knowledge of the campaign financing rules of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

Members of the public interested in serving on this Committee are asked to submit a resume, and covering letter, marked "Confidential" no later than Noon on March 6, 2026 to:

Vicki Bull, Clerk
Township of Minden Hills
Box 359, 7- Milne St., Minden, ON K0M 2K0

For further information, please contact Vicki Bull, Clerk by email at admin@mindenhills.ca

We thank all applicants for applying, but only the selected candidates will be contacted. Personal information and supporting material is collected and used in accordance with the ***Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.***

Centex makes moves in Minden

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

A new gas station will be welcoming drivers along Highway 35 very soon.

Many Minden residents have expressed their frustration with the loss of Minden's Jug City. Situated alongside businesses like Pet-Tyme Animal Krackers and Sonya's Hairstyling, the Jug City was a huge draw for drivers to stop while on their way to downtown Minden or continuing on their way to Haliburton.

The visibility of this location, pre-existing gas and shopping infrastructure, and large space drew the attention of the Centex team.

Based in Alberta, Centex is a 100 per cent Canadian-owned-and-operated company that prides itself on being Canada's largest independent fuel brand.

What used to be Jug City is currently receiving a facelift. Centex is proud to say that they intend to open their new location this spring. In addition to gas and convenience offerings, the station will open with a Country Style and Chester's Chicken and Mucho Burrito that will be ready in the summer.

Lindsey Allan, marketing manager for Centex says that offering more than just gas and convenience encourages customers to make a trip to Centex for everyday essentials and quick, delicious meals without the extra travel time.

"The renovations are going well," said Allan. "Although we're new to the area, we've received a lot of positive support with regards to our opening and are looking forward to becoming an active part of the local community."

Chester's Chicken has been included in several Centex locations up to this date. Using a refined menu selection that serves Southern-style fried chicken, quality can be ensured while filling in a niche within the community.

Centex hopes to open their new Minden location, which will include a Country Style and Chester's Chicken in the spring. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Although the anticipated opening date is planned for April, an official grand opening is in the works for summer when the weather is warmer and all amenities are fully operational.

Centex offers competitive fuel pricing and straight forward savings. Customers can take advantage of discount Discount Days on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays to save two cents per litre. The Cashback Rewards program allows customers to save even more by earning two per cent cash back on in-store purchases and two cents per litre on all fuel purchases. Members get access to additional perks, such as the monthly sweepstakes contest where you have the chance to win $500 in cashback through discount days, allowing customers to save two cents per litre. They also offer a loyalty program to earn two per cent cash back from in-store purchases and to save two cents per litre. Loyal program members get entered in monthly sweepstakes where you have the chance to win $500 in cashback dollars.

With over 20 locations in Ontario to date, Centex hopes to increase their presence in the province with even more locations in the coming year.

Minden Hills talks trash

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

Changes are coming to garbage allotment cards in Minden Hills.

Chelsea Cosh, manager of waste facilities for Minden Hills presented these changes to the Minden Hills council meeting held on Thursday, Feb. 12.

The cards will be reduced to 104 bags per year, equalling two bags of garbage per week. The current cards service 156 bags, or three bags of garbage per week.

"Very few people are using their entire card," said Cosh. "We can continue to look at other garbage bag reduction opportunities in the future."

In recent years, the township has implemented a textile recycling program, a Reuse Centre, and improvements to the blue box recycling program. Recent studies and audits have indicated to council that around 40 per cent of household garbage contains organics. Recently, the council has endorsed a new organics program with Molok organic waste collectors.

"It encourages people to do the recycling and take advantage of all the programs and hopefully we will extend our landfill," said Mayor Bob Carter.

In a study in 2016, the landfill is estimated to have a lifespan to 2046.

Council voted on the changes to the waste disposal allotment unanimously.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Applicant: Farley
Lot 3, Concession 2, Kushog Lake
Geographic Township of Stanhope

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Algonquin Highlands has declared part of the original shore road allowance lying in front of Lot 3, Concession 2, in the geographic Township of Stanhope, in the Township of Algonquin Highlands, County of Haliburton, to be surplus.

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Municipal Corporation of the Township of Algonquin Highlands proposes to enact a By-Law to stop-up, close and convey to the abutting property owner(s) that part of the original shore road allowance lying in front of Lot 3, Concession 2, described as all and singular that certain parcel or tract of land and premises situate, lying and being in the Geographic Township of Stanhope, in the County of Haliburton and being composed of the following:

FIRSTLY: THAT part of the original shore road allowance lying in front of Lot 3, Concession 2, described as Part 1 on a Plan deposited in the Registry Office for the Registry Division of Haliburton County as Plan 19R-11192.

The proposed By-Law will come before the said Council for consideration at its regular meeting at the Algonquin Highlands Municipal Office, 1123 North Shore Road, on the **5th day of March, 2026** and at that time, the Council will hear in person or by his/her counsel, solicitor or agent any person who claims that his/her land will be prejudicially affected and who applies to be heard. Any person who wishes to be heard by Council regarding this proposed closure must contact the Clerk to schedule a delegation with Council.

Dated: February 17, 2026

Sean O'Callaghan
Planner
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Rd.
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1S0
Tel: (705) 489-2379
Email: socallaghan@algonquinhighlands.ca

www.mindenhills.ca **In Case of Emergency Dial 911 / After-Hours Municipal Emergency Dial 1-866-856-3247**

THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS
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COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

February 26 – Regular Council Meeting
March 12 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

SAFE WINTER DRIVING

When a winter storm is expected, all municipalities have a plan. Drivers need to have their own plan. It is important to delay unnecessary travel during significant storms to give plows time to do their jobs. It's also safer for drivers.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

• A selection of artwork from the Agnes Jamieson Gallery's permanent collection, as well as new acquisitions, is now on display. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.

• Join us for the 3rd annual Archie Stouffer Student Art Exhibition from February 21 to March 21 in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery. The student artist reception and awards ceremony will be held on Saturday, February 28 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.

• Join the UFO's (UnFinished Objects Craft Group) in the Welch Room on Friday, February 20 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM. All are welcome!

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

MINDEN HILLS MUNICIPAL ELECTION

The 2026 Municipal Election is scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2026 and our website continues to be updated with election information and resources.
Visit www.mindenhills.ca/election for Voter Registration details, Candidate Information, Key Dates and more.

S.G. NESBITT MEMORIAL ARENA

• Zoo To You will be back during March Break for two shows. Registration is required and opens at 8:00am on Monday February 23rd. Both shows are on Monday March 16th. The first one is 9:00am-10:00am and the second is 10:15am-11:15am.

• Come and join the staff at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena for the PA Day on Friday February 27, 2026. There is a full day PA Day camp for children 4-12 years old, babysitters course for youth 11-15 years old, and drop in Public Skating, Floor Hockey and Basketball.

STRATEGIC PLAN – PRIORITIZATION ONLINE SURVEY

Your voice matters in Minden Hills and we need your input. This is your opportunity to share what matters to you as well as helping to guide community priorities for the years to come. The online survey will be available for input until Friday, February 27, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. Visit our website to link to the survey at www.mindenhills.ca.
Questions? Please email admin@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-1260 ext. 527.

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON K0M 2K0 705-286-1260 Toll Free: 1-844-277-1260 Fax 705-286-4917 Township.Minden.Hills Minden Hills@twpmindenhills @Township_MindenHills

Inclusivity a top priority for local youth

from page 4

gender affirming care. Vossen says that gender affirming care should not be considered specialized care.

"Often patients are put on really long waitlists by doctors that mean well, but are not versed in gender-affirming care," said Vossen. "They think they are doing what is best for the patient, but I find it disappointing because there are so many resources available for health care providers now to expand their knowledge in order to access care that is important."

"It is quite a journey to get there, especially the younger you are," said Sisson. "The younger you are, the longer you are on that journey."

Relationships, both platonic and romantic, are a huge part of the development of youth.

"A healthy relationship is one based in respect and trust," said Vossen. "It feels like one where you can fully be yourself without fear of judgement or shame, where you can express all of yourself and be met with love and empathy."

Some advice Vossen shared is to consider if your thoughts are heard, and if you can show up as yourself in a relationship.

A huge part of their peer support program is to connect 2SLGBTQ+ youth together and show them that they have a long future.

"It is impossible to envision a future for yourself if you don't know that people who share your experiences have survived and thrived before you," said Vossen. "That representation is essential."

One example of representation is at the popular Pride in the Highlands events across the county in August.

The growth of a youth's social circle can act as a direct antidote to the hurdles that 2SLGBTQ+ youth face.

"Finding community shows you that there is no singular right way to be trans or queer," said Vossen.

Developing a relationship with yourself, being authentic, and unapologetically embracing yourself are all lessons that cisgenedered people can learn from the trans community.

"I think rural queers are really underestimated," said Vossen.

With the challenges of growing up queer, Vossen says that it makes for more creative, resilient youth.

For those under 20, there is a 24-hour 2SLGBTQ+ youth support line that can be texted at 647-694-4275 or communicate online at youthline.ca

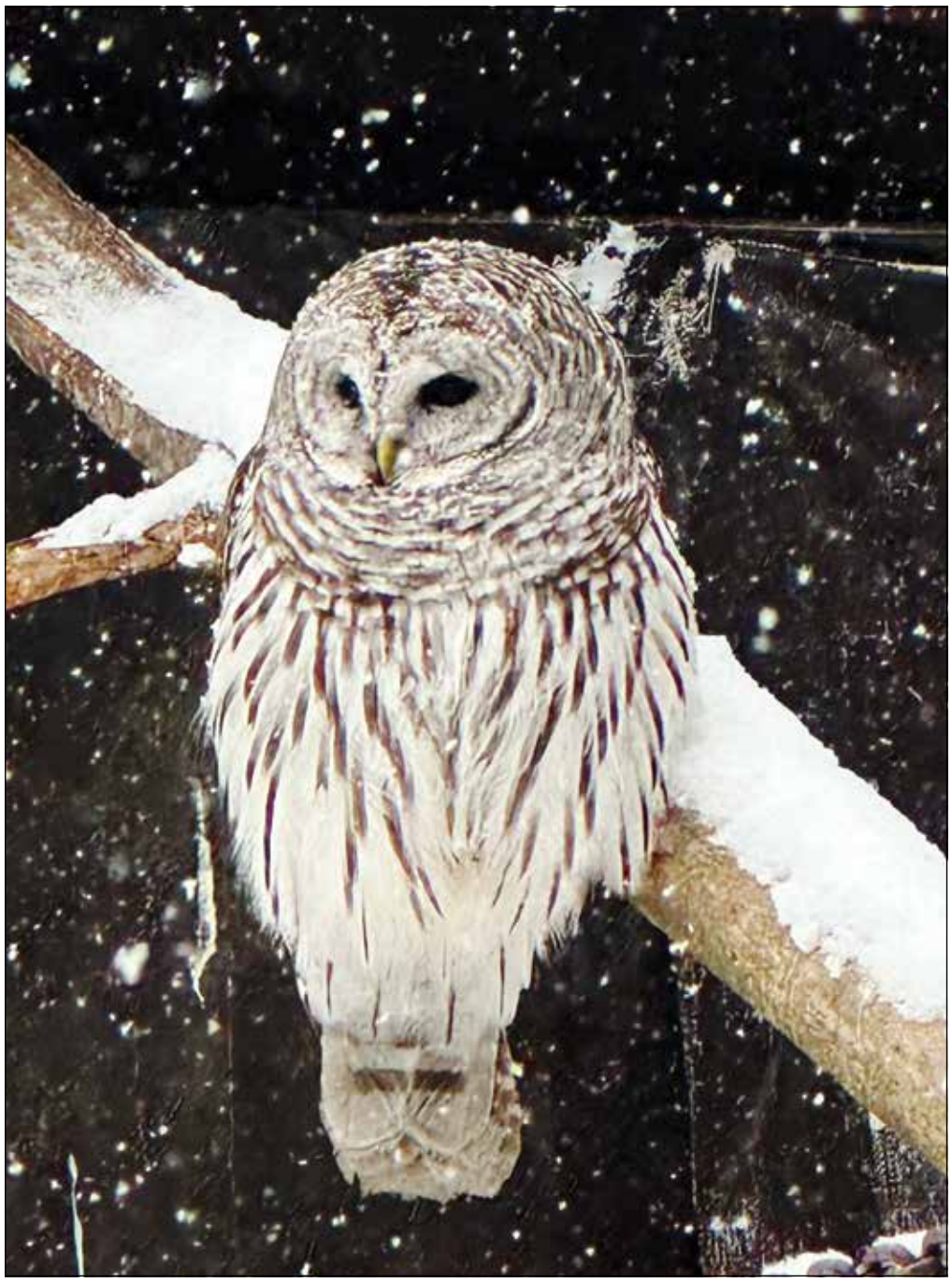
The phone number for the Trans Lifeline in Canada is 877-330-6366.

The Trans Peer Outreach program, offered by the Canadian Mental Health Association is available to those living in the Haliburton County area. More information about this program and how to sign up is available at cmhahkpr.ca.

Appointments can be made to discuss gender affirming care locally through the Haliburton Highlands Family Healthcare Team's website hhfht.ca.

Carl Vossen, Haliburton Wellness Hub's new 2SLGBTQ+ Peer Support Specialist wants to create opportunities for connection for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Haliburton County, make youth feel less alone, and support youth through their life journeys. Vossen will be available for peer support in Haliburton on Wednesdays and alternating Tuesdays and Fridays. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Drop-in hours for the Youth Wellness Hub include Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Fridays from 3:30 to 5 p.m. They also offer drop-in services at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre every other Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.



Owl by Destiny Lapierre.

Moose peeking through by Tammy Nash.

Blue Jay by Jill Moulton.

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Another cold snap hits Haliburton County

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

It's been a winter for the books, as the County of Haliburton wades through its third major cold warning of the year in early February.

When temperatures dip to consistently below -20°C or colder, Lakelands Public Health sends out a warning to all individuals falling within the warning area, throughout Haliburton County, the City of Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland County, and the City and County of Peterborough.

"Temperatures have been persistently cold lately, and it's important for everyone to take precautions whenever spending extended time outdoors," said Julie Bromley, manager of emergency services and healthy environments with Lakelands Public Health. With the weekends hovering between -30 °C to -35 °C or colder, Bromley noted cause for concern if anyone is exposed to the elements, particularly with the wind chill.

"Extreme cold conditions can pose serious health risks, especially for people experiencing homelessness, older adults, young children, and those with chronic health conditions," she said. "Staying informed about weather conditions, dressing appropriately for the cold, and checking in on vulnerable neighbours are key steps to staying safe."

Lakelands Public Health noted that temperatures are particularly frigid late at night and early in the mornings, and individuals braving the outdoors should be prepared. It was also expressed that if it's too cold for you, it's certainly too cold for your pet to be in the elements, as well.

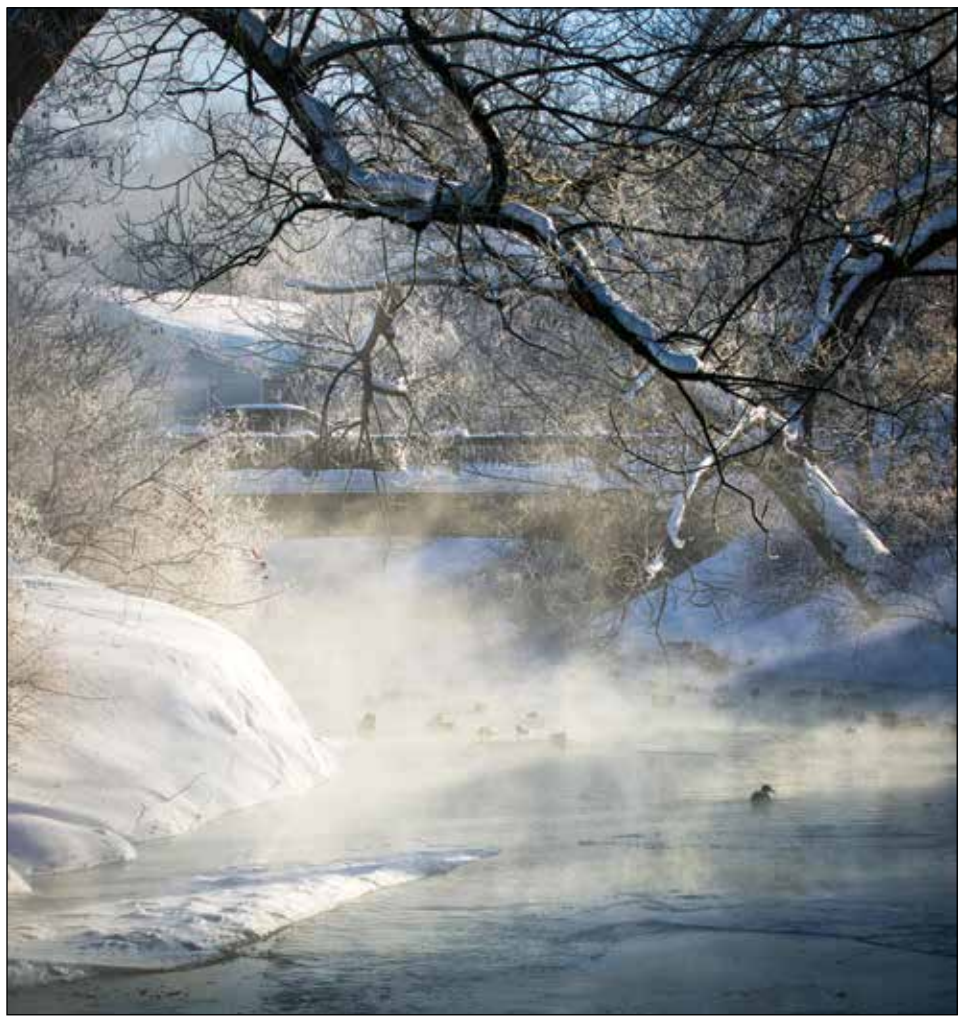
Signs of frostbite include numb, pale, and hardened skin on exposed digits and features. Hypothermia symptoms include confusion, slurred speech, difficulty walking, and intense shivering. Lakelands noted that severe hypothermia is a medical emergency, and requires immediate attention.

Lakelands strongly encouraged individuals to mitigate time outdoors during these cold snaps, and ensure home heating systems are functioning properly, and carbon monoxide detectors are working.

They also encouraged individuals to utilize heating centres where possible. At the time, Minden Hills is the sole municipality with dedicated services to offer heating. "S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena is open Monday through Sunday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m." said Candace McGuigan, the director of community services for Minden. "People can come and get warmed up or use cell phone charging stations if needed."

"We monitor temperatures and warnings from Environment Canada, as well as the programming and events at our facility and what capacity and further space we can offer, if needed," added McGuigan. "We work with user groups, if we think we may have people coming to warm up, and designate space in the gymnasium hallway or walking track."

The cold warning ended on Feb. 9, with Lakelands Public Health continuing monitoring weather conditions and providing updates as needed. Residents can also sign up for WeatherCAN alerts to receive timely weather notifications.



A crisp day in Haliburton showcases the mist coming off the river that winds into Head Lake Park. This year, there have been a record number of formal cold warnings shared from Lakelands Public Health. /ADAM FRISK staff

HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

Home Game

VS

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STOUFFVILLE PIRATES

Saturday, Feb. 28
4 p.m.

S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena
For more information please visit our website
WWW.HUSKIESHOCKEY.CA

Go skating in Dysart and Highlands East

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

Perhaps your holiday resolution is to exercise more this year, or meet more people in the community.

Now that we are past the holiday season, some may be experiencing the winter blues and say that there is nothing to do or keep active with the snow, slush, and cold weather.

Well, it is time to dust off your skates and feel free as a bird again by visiting your local indoor or outdoor skating rinks across the county.

Across Dysart and Highlands East, there are five rinks for people to go skating at.

Dysart

There are four skating rinks in the municipality of Dysart. These rinks include A.J. LaRue Arena, the Maple Avenue Rink, West Guilford Rink, and the Harcourt Outdoor Rink.

Dysart's outdoor rinks include the Maple Avenue Rink, West Guilford Rink, and Harcourt Outdoor Rink.

Andrea Mueller, manager of programs and events for Dysart says that the outdoor skating rinks are very popular with their local communities. The rinks see the most visitors after school, in the evenings, and on the weekends.

Since Mueller began working with Dysart in 2013, the two existing outdoor rinks, in West Guilford and Harcourt, were in rough condition. The rinks have been repaired and in 2018, Dysart partnered with the Rotary Club of Haliburton to create an outdoor rink at the former skate park. The rink is maintained by municipal staff and in the warmer months, the rink acts as a ball hockey court.

"Skating at the outdoor rinks, gets you outside and breathing in the fresh air," said Mueller. "There is something magical about lacing up a pair of skates and having the opportunity to skate outdoors."

All the outdoor rinks are available on a first come, first serve basis. The Maple Avenue Rink is located at 76 Maple Avenue, the West Guilford Outdoor Rink is located at 1061 Kennisis Lake Road, and the Harcourt Outdoor Rink is located at 5004 Midway Street in Harcourt.

Mueller says that the public should be aware that the rinks should not be used during periods of thaw, when the ice surface is wet, soft, or when the rink is closed. The outdoor rinks are unsupervised and any use of the outdoor rinks are at the user's risk. All skaters are asked to wear properly fitting helmets. The rinks can be used for both skating and hockey, but the municipality asks that all users of the rink are respectful of one another in the space. No contact hockey is permitted.

Nothing is more Canadian than connecting with your local community at the outdoor skating rink.

The unmistakable A.J. LaRue Arena is situated in the heart of Haliburton. The arena is named for Albert LaRue, a beloved community member and coach who pushed for the community centre and rink in Haliburton.

LaRue's preservation and bus company also paved the way for the Haliburton Junior D Huskies.

The A.J. LaRue Arena offers a variety of both skating and shinny options for everyone to enjoy. Stick and Puck is for those who are looking to improve their stick handling skills. This skate is specifically offered to allow for the use of sticks and pucks while skating around.

There will be no goalies and playing hockey is not permitted. Helmets are strongly recommended

It is $2 per skater to participate.

Public Skating is for those wanting to have a nice skating experience. A CSA approved helmet is strongly recommended. No one will be allowed on the ice without skates. Youth seven and under must be accompanied by an adult. No reckless behaviour will be permitted, including games of tag and chasing other skaters. No food or drinks are allowed near the ice surface, player's benches or penalty boxes. Hockey sticks and pucks are not permitted during public skating times. It is $2 to participate.

Shinny is an informal game of hockey, often without goaltenders, many rules, or the competitive nature of hockey. Full hockey equipment must be worn. A CSA approved helmet must be worn by all skaters. Slap shots, checking, and other body contact is not permitted. Shinny costs $5 to participate in.

Youth Shinny costs $5 to participate in and is intended for skaters aged 10 to 15 years old.

Adults Only Skating for adults looking to skate recreationally. Sticks and pucks are not permitted during this time. Properly fitting helmets are strongly recommended. It costs $2 per skater.

Parent and Tot Skate is intended for parents and their children to enjoy skating together.

Sensory Friendly Skates occur regularly throughout the month. Sensory friendly skates are for those wanting to have a skating experience with reduced noise, dim lighting, and no music. Helmets are strongly recommended. Youth aged seven and under must be accompanied by an adult. Parents cannot carry their youth while skating on the ice surface. Hockley sticks and pucks will not be permitted. No reckless behaviour, chasing, or games of tag are permitted.

Sensory Friendly Skates occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Please visit dysartetal.ca for accurate skating times.

The A.J. LaRue Arena is located at 728 Mountain Street in Haliburton.

Highlands East

Highlands East is home to one indoor arena, the Keith Tallman Memorial Arena. A cornerstone of the community, the Keith Tallman Memorial Arena was named after Keith Tallman who served in local government for nearly 40 years. Tallman served 28 years as Reeve of Monmouth Township and was on the Haliburton County Council for 36 years, with several as acting Warden.

Free Public Skating is intended for everyone to come out and enjoy some skating.

Free Public Skating takes place on Sundays from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Adults and Seniors Free Public Skating is intended for both adults and seniors to enjoy recreational skating.

Free Adults and Seniors Public Skating takes place on Tuesdays from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Free Parents and Tots Skating is intended for parents with their children.

The Free Parent and Tots Skating takes place from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Skating is a great way to get out and explore Haliburton County during the cold winter months. Pictured, Pearl and Ruby Mansfield explore the Dysart arena during a past skating season. /FILE

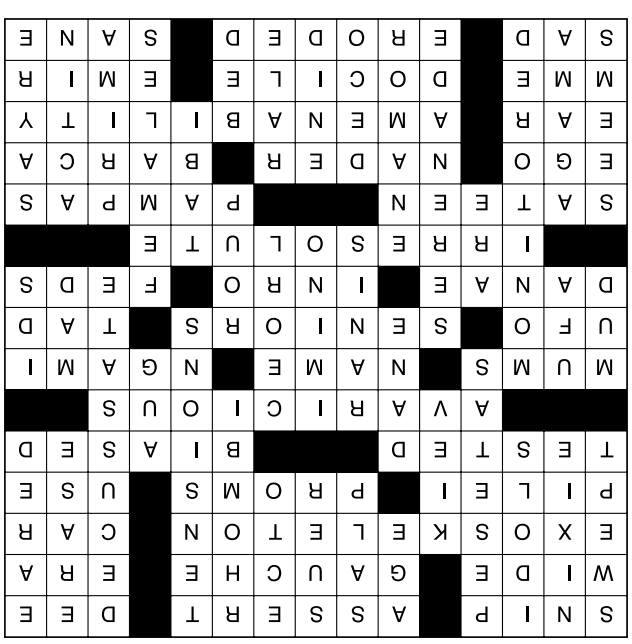
There is also hockey available to be played for a fee. Men's pickup hockey takes place on Tuesdays from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m Women's pickup hockey takes place on Mondays from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Old Timer's Hockey takes place from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursdays.

The Keith Tallman Memorial Arena is located at 2256 Loop Road in Wilberforce.

Highlands East's Property Supervisor Jim Alden recommends wearing a helmet while skating at the arena.

There is something for everyone to do this winter, if you know where to look. During these cold winter months, it is important to get outside and get moving. Soon enough, warm weather will be on its way.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



SUDOKU SOLUTION

2	9	1	6	3	5	4	7	8
4	6	3	1	7	8	2	5	9
7	8	5	9	2	4	1	3	6
6	3	2	4	1	9	7	8	5
8	1	7	3	5	2	9	6	4
5	4	9	8	6	7	3	1	2
3	2	8	5	4	1	6	9	7
1	5	4	7	9	6	8	2	3
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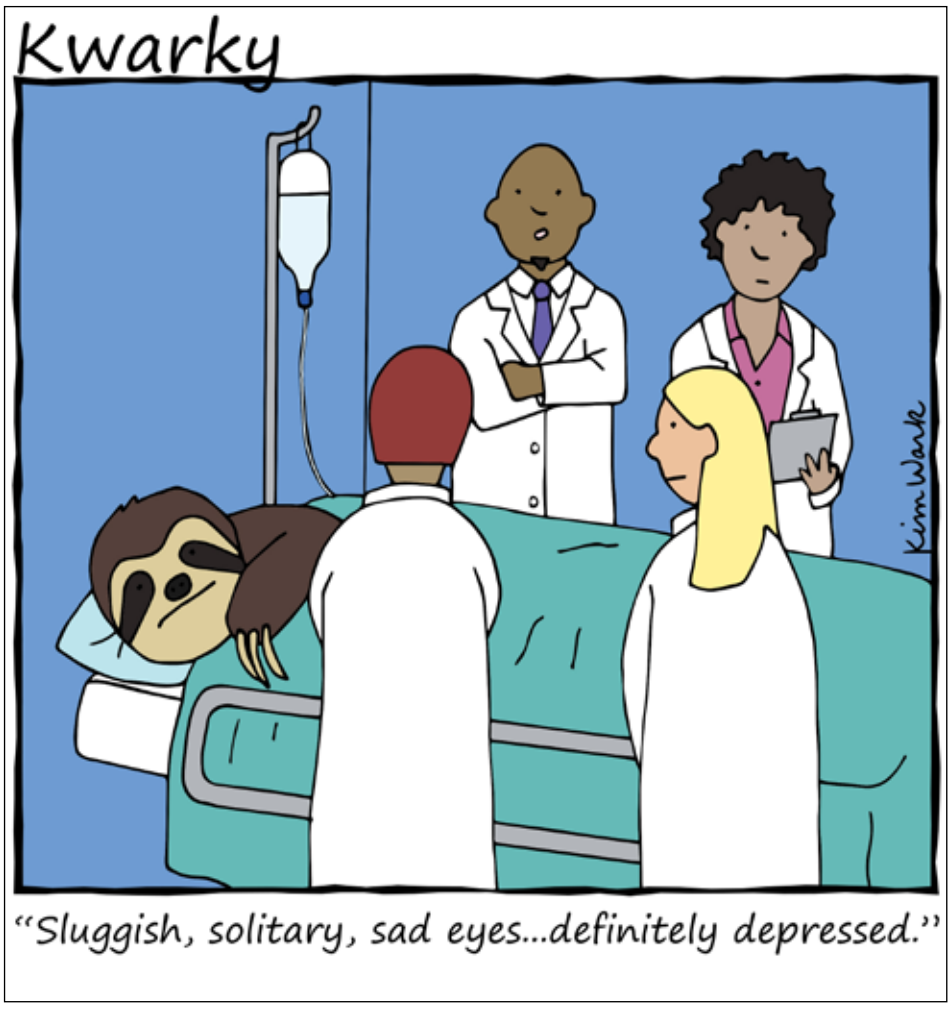
Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
emily@haliburtonpress.com



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SUDOKU

					5	4		
				7		2		9
7	8					1	3	
		2	4	1				
				5		9	6	
	4	9						2
								7
1	5							
		6	2	8				

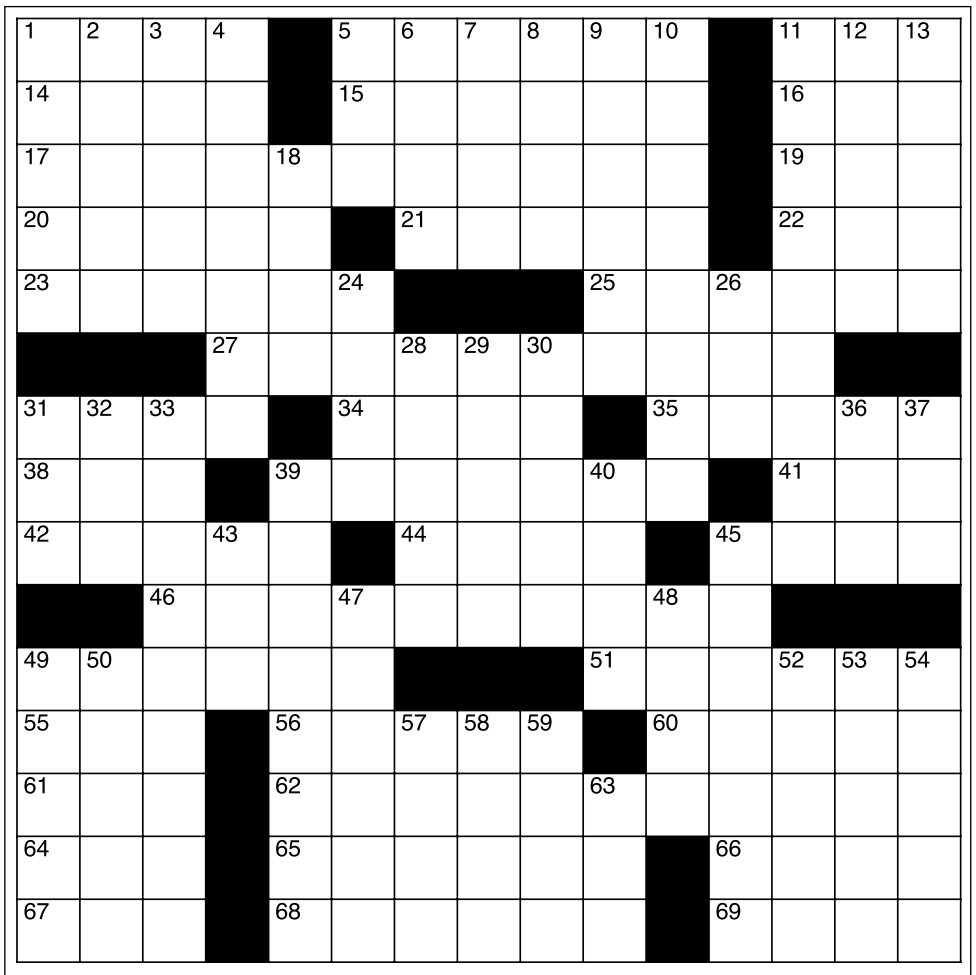
Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 17



CLUES ACROSS
1. Cut quickly
5. A way to state clearly
11. River in NE Scotland
14. Expansive
15. Lacking social polish
16. Amount of time
17. Frame
19. Automobile
20. Toadstools
21. High school dances
22. Utilize
23. Experimented with
25. One-sided
27. Acquisitive
31. Potted plants
34. Everyone has one
35. Kalahari Desert lake
38. Unidentified flying object
39. People 65 and over
41. Small amount
42. Daughter of Acrisius
44. Ornamental box
45. Government agents
46. Uncertain
49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
51. Treeless plains
55. One's sense of self-importance
56. Consumer advocate
60. Type of lounger
61. Body part
62. Can be persuaded
64. Woman (French)
65. Ready and willing to be taught
66. Arab ruler title
67. Unhappy
68. Gradually went away
69. Able to think clearly

CLUES DOWN
1. Brushed
2. Small water spirit (Germ.)
3. Heroes
4. Monetary units
5. Some don't want to share theirs
6. Free-swimming invertebrate
7. Litigates
8. Outer
9. Parallelograms
10. Uneasy feelings
11. Cross
12. A way to remove
13. Pages can be dog-__
18. Ukrainian city
24. A citizen of Denmark
26. Month
28. Hindu queens
29. Group of chemicals
30. Rider of Rohan
31. Wet dirt
32. Southwestern Russia city
33. Observed
36. Angry
37. DriversÕ licenses
39. Musical composition
40. Auction
43. They __
45. Women
47. Be filled with love for
48. Thick-soled sock
49. Appears
50. Old World lizard
52. The leading performer
53. Protein
54. "Gunga Din"script writer
57. Art __, around 1920
58. __ Blyton, children's author
59. Abnormal breathing
63. A place to rest

Answers on page 17

MADE IN

CANADA

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Newly renovated 2-unit house on 9.5 scenic acres near Haliburton. LOWER: 1-bed, 1-bath. Features open-concept living, new appliances, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces. 10 minutes from Haliburton & perfect for peaceful living. Contact: info@aboveboardcarpentry.com **705-455-2196**

Spacious one bedroom, one bath lower apartment located in the heart of Minden. The apartment provides a perfect blend of town and country living. Features include front door access, open concept living, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces, internet and preferential parking spots. $1,875 All inclusive plus shared hydro. Please Contact: 1-647-394-4899. Photos available upon request.

---

2 bedroom/ 1 bedroom + sitting room, upper floor apartment, non-smoker. Located in rural area between Haliburton and Minden. Fridge and stove, partially furnished. Rent is $750, including utilities, with 1st and last month's rent required. Applicants must have a full time job or pension and provide references. Please contact : jimdeitz50@gmail.com

COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT

Fitness Room for rent: Blue Sky Yoga Studio at Haliburton Chiropractic. Bright & Open in Downtown Haliburton with Private entrance and washroom. **Health Professional/Therapist treatment room for rent** at Haliburton Chiropractic. Furnished with massage table, desk & chair. Available by the hour, half or full day. Contact: 705 457 3500. info@haliburtonchiropractic.com

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March 4	Highland Hills United Church
March 11	St. Paul's Anglican Church
March 18	Our Lady of Fantima Catholic Church
March 25	Minden Bible Church

Service 12 Noon followed by soup lunch
By Donation

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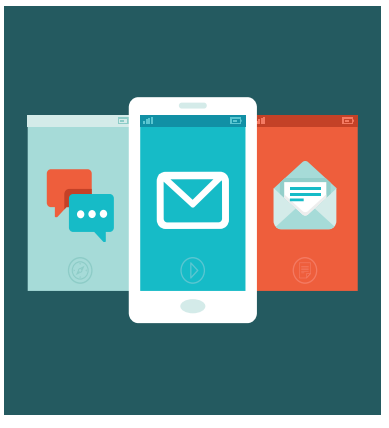

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EMPLOYMENT

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton Requires a Grants & Procurements Coordinator (18-month contract)

The County of Haliburton is currently accepting applications for a Grants & Procurements Coordinator. This new, vacant position is currently offered as a fixed term 18-month contract.

Reporting to the Deputy Treasurer, this position secures external funding opportunities and ensures compliant and transparent procurement processes. This dual-function role prioritizes responsibilities associated with identifying, securing, and administering grants The successful candidate will have post-secondary education and 4-5 years of experience in a relevant field.

This position includes participation in the OMERS defined benefit pension program and employer paid extended health benefits.The hourly wage range is $36.32 - $42.49.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a more detailed posting and job description.

Please forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than **Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 4:30pm.**

We thank all who apply for this position; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The County of Haliburton is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

The Municipality of Dysart et al is recruiting a Deputy Treasurer

Due to an upcoming retirement, we are seeking applications from experienced and qualified candidates to fulfill the position of Deputy Treasurer.

The complete detailed job description can be viewed through the Municipal website at: www.dysartetal.ca/careers

We offer a comprehensive benefit program and enrolment in the OMERS pension plan and a competitive salary grid from $80,464 to $94,131 per annum. Expected start date is Monday, May 4, 2026.

Please submit a resume and cover letter, preferably via email, no later than 4:00 pm on Monday February 23, 2026, to the attention of the Human Resources Manager – Municipality of Dysart et al – hr@dysartetal.ca
P.O. Box 389, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0

We thank all of those who apply, but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Accommodation for applicants with disabilities will be provided upon request. The Municipality of Dysart et al is an equal opportunity employer. Personal information is collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used only for employment purposes.

OBITUARY

In Loving Memory of

Ronald (Ronnie) Jacob Graham

Passed away peacefully at the Haliburton Hospital on Friday, February 13, 2026 surrounded by his family, in his 90th year.

Beloved husband of the late Millie (Dufty), Edna (Lounsbury), Della (Mintz) and survived by his partner Glady (Lawson). Dear father of Wayne (Lou), Randy (Shari), Scott (Mary) and Tanya (Richard). Loving grandpa of Nicole, Christopher, Jen, Joe, Tyler, Lyndsay, Gage and great grandpa of Simon, Noah, Ocean, Logan, Juliette and Oliver. Dear brother to 5 brothers and 6 sisters. Fondly remembered by his nieces, nephews, family and friends. The family would like to thank the exceptional care from Dr. Lupu and the staff at the Haliburton Hospital.

Friends are invited to visit the family at the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., 127 Bobcaygeon Rd., P.O. Box 427, Minden K0M 2K0 on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 from 11:00 am until the time of the Service to Celebrate Ron's Life at 1:00 pm. Reception to follow in the Monk-Cray Family Centre at the funeral home. Spring Interment at Kinmount Cemetery.

Memorial Donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF) would be appreciated by the family.

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Hodgson meets with school councils

by Andrew Milne

MPP Chris Hodgson told members of Haliburton County school councils last week that they are very much part of the province's plans.

What those plans are, however, he couldn't really say yet.

Members of councils from across the county met with Hodgson last week at Archie Stouffer Elementary School.

The meeting, requested by the councils, was called to give them an opportunity to ask questions on the implementation of the changes to education proposed by the province in mid-January.

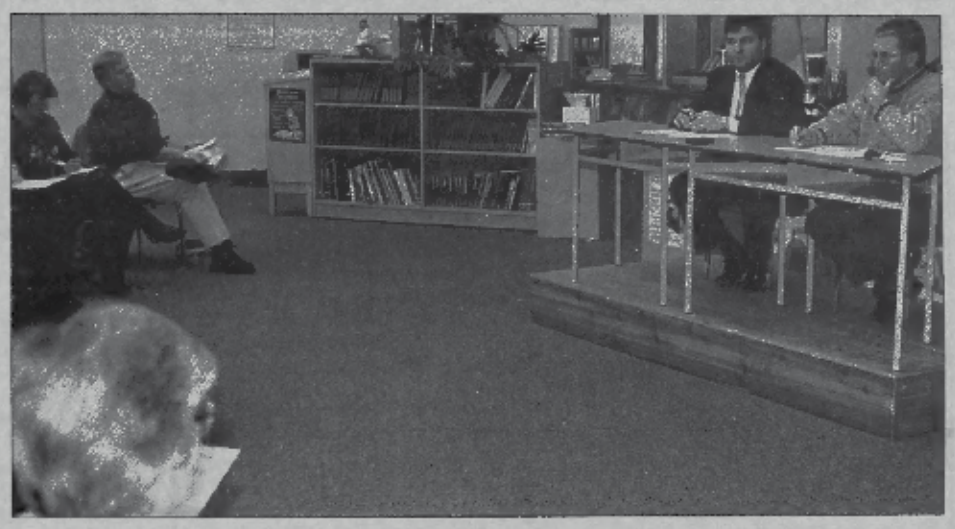
Approximately 25 people were present for the meeting, and came prepared with a list of questions, aimed at resolving key aspects of the amalgamation of school boards and the shifting of education finance to the provincial purview.

Hodgson, however, had few answers for them. In symphony with his cabinet colleagues' statements of the past few weeks, he responded to most inquiries that he did not know, that much of the information they were requesting hadn't been determined, but that he would to take those questions to the consulting committees, and to Minister of Education John Snobelen.

Hodgson took the opportunity to defend the government against charges that it is moving too fast, and failing to consult, and made a statements emphasizing the government's belief in the need for drastic change.

"I don't have all the answers at this time, but I'll be happy to tell you what I do know. I can tell you that the roles of school councils will be the same or enhanced under Bill 104... Tell me what you think your role should be."

Council members had varying reactions. Some seemed to be feeling some of the frustration the province's transfer partners have been expressing in the atmosphere of confusion that has followed the province's mid-January blitz of restructuring legislation. They didn't seem too happy to be told, again, that most of the answers aren't there yet, and that the government couldn't say for sure in some cases when they might be. Hodgson did say much of the clear legal powers of councils should be spelled out in legislation within a few months.



Archie Stouffer Elementary School principal Peter Forgrave, right, was the host as Victoria-Haliburton MPP Chris Hodgson answered questions posed by members of the newly appointed school councils from throughout the county.

Hodgson also defended the government's decision to announce as much as it has without having more of the specific details of implementation in place. Said Hodgson, "It's a Catch-22. If we'd come out with everything decided, people would have said we weren't being democratic... We've consulted, and we will be consulting through the year. We want to hear from you."

Though some councillors were sympathetic, many also expressed reservations about the speed of the government's action -- and some concern for the impending amalgamation of the board. Said one woman, "We had a good board. You're taking that away."

Said Jane Johnston, a Haliburton parent who has been involved in education issues since the controversy over the proposed closure of Victoria Street school, "I've had the opportunity to speak to the board a number of times over the past year, and they've listened. I'm not sure I believe I'm still going to have that opportunity in the future."

Square pegs, round holes

School councils occupy an odd position in the restructur-

(more on page 4)

Official comment yet to come

Minden councillors cool on Barber report

Anson, Hindon and Minden councillor Daryl Moore is not convinced that the findings of the Barber Report, which claim Haliburton County municipalities can save $1.25-million, is accurate.

Discounting the $600,000 the report says can be saved by transferring winter maintenance of county roads to the municipalities, Moore says the savings amount to an average of about $10,000 per municipality.

"He has shown us very little savings," Moore said.

Councillor Sinc Nesbitt agreed. He said that the benchmark that has been set for the winter road maintenance, is based on the unit costs in townships have the fewest miles of roads to plow.

Moore added that the figures from 1995 were used for the analysis and that the 1996 figures will show savings over the previous year.

"The report is redundant, in my opinion," Moore said.

Moore was also concerned that the report was biased in favour of keeping the 10 municipal and county governments intact. He's not convinced that there would be no savings in going to a one-tier system. That option was not considered when the report was being compiled.

The Minden council will be reviewing the report in detail and a statement regarding Anson, Hindon and Minden's evaluation of the report is expected.

Responding to reeve Jeanne Anthon's statement that what was reported in the papers was accurate, Moore said that it is up to council to issue a statement outlining the municipality's opinion regarding the report.

Moore said it is unfortunate that the report received the publicity it has before the municipalities have had the opportunity to analyze the information.

Bank tenders virtually identical

Anson, Hindon and Minden council asked the two banks in the village to submit tenders for the banking services the municipality requires. The municipality was hoping to get the best value for its banking dollars.

Both the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, which has been providing the municipality's banking for many years, and the Toronto Dominion Bank, responded with proposals. After reviewing both tenders, council found the cost of services offered were virtually identical.

Council saw no advantage in switching from the CIBC to the TD, so CIBC will continue to be the municipality's banking service provider.

AH&M supports HCSA bridge proposal

Anson, Hindon and Minden council has offered moral support, if not finan-

(more on page 5)

Police issue warning on tainted drugs

The OPP is investigating incidents which may have involved narcotics laced with a dangerous poison.

Details are sketchy all around though the substance is known to have resulted in two people being taken to hospital in Minden. The high school was asked to announce a warning over the public address system, but a spokesman could not say what narcotics were involved.

The OPP says two youths from the Haliburton-Minden area were hospitalized following the use of what the force release called 'an unknown narcotic'. The force says they believe the drug originated in the Haliburton-Minden area.

Police say they are still investigating the incidents, and are waiting for lab results on the substance.

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Log Chute update straight from the source

from page 1

Throughout the life of the log chute, the chute has continuously been repaired and replaced.

In the early 2000s, Carol Moffat and her husband Tony Aymong sought to repair the log chute once again. Building the cradles for the log chute in their wood shop and with the support of the township, hundreds of volunteers and two local construction companies, the log chute was repaired over the course of nine days. Moffat also traveled to Library and Archives Canada to look at repairs made in 1948 to improve historical accuracy.

In addition to its repairs, a community park was created for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the history of Algonquin Highlands.

"It was a massive undertaking," said Moffat. "I spent six years organizing the entire site."

While Moffat and the former council sought to upkeep the park, flooding damage in 2017 took its toll on the site. Once the pandemic hit, the log chute discussion was put on the backburner.

Fast forward to today, the discussion of the log chute's repair has returned to council. Last August, Algonquin Highlands council received a quote on how much demolition of the log chute would cost.

Last Thursday, Feb. 5, AH council received a report from TULLOCH Engineering on what sections of the log chute were most needing repair and how much the repairs will cost.

Divided into three sections starting closest to the dam, council says that the part of the log chute most deserving of repair is the part closest to the dam. Considered to be in good condition, repair to this section is estimated to cost $67,000. The other two sections further downstream are in fair and poor condition respectively, with the cost of repair estimated to be over $100,000 per section.

TULLOCH reported that in total, the cost for a full replacement of the log chute is $550,000.

"These costs don't include any costs that we made need to incur for water level controls from Parks Canada," said Chris Card, parks, recreation, and trails manager.

Parks Canada also requires flexibility of dates for when they need to shut off the water.

"This has been a long time coming," said Mayor Liz Danielsen. "I would love to see the first section rebuilt."

She also expressed concerns with Parks Canada's past comments of the intent to move the dam. Parks Canada says that the dam will need replacing within ten years. With this uncertainty, she does not think the council should aim to replace the whole chute just yet.

Card says that further along in this process, he hopes that the log chute will have a maintenance process similar to the Dorset Tower "where you get biannual engineer inspections that make recommendations on repairs."

"The problem is that there is no guarantee that the dam will be in the same location," said Danielsen.

> ***"It is an important cultural asset and we don't have an awful lot of them ... people love the log chute."***
>
> — Liz Danielsen, Mayor, Algonquin Highlands

"It is an important cultural asset and we don't have an awful lot of them," said Danielsen. "People love the log chute."

Deputy Mayor Dailloux asked about the logs that are in the water and plans for maintaining an authentic look of the log chute.

Card replied saying that some of the logs can be reused and utilized at the hand of skilled woodworkers. The goal of the log chute repairs would be maintaining an authentic look of the chute, while improving its foundation and longevity before its full repairs can be completed.

"It would be replacing like for like," said Card.

The next step for repairing the log chute would be giving a green lit for engineers to create a draft in eight to 10 weeks. The draft will be finalized and then tender documents can be created after that. Three weeks will be needed for well informed bids to be placed along with site meetings. It could then take several weeks for council to approve of the bid and finalize contracts, before finally moving on to construction.

"If I give the go ahead as soon as I leave this meeting, the best case scenario would be a fall construction," said Card.

Danielsen expressed that there is an urgency to complete the project this year, before the new council replaces them. While council has funds to cover the partial repairs, she does not want the log chute falling to the backburner again.

Card sought clarification as to whether the section one's longevity is to allow it to survive before a complete replacement, or to have the section one survive indefinitely.

"It would be nice to keep section one in longevity and add the other two sections to it as opposed to having to replace that again," said Danielsen.

Council directed staff to replace section one.

"Once it is gone, it will probably be gone forever," said Moffat. "Something is better than nothing."

The log chute remains a popular tourism site in Algonquin Highlands, being named one of the "seven wonders" of Haliburton County.

With the repairs moving forward, Moffat hopes she and her husband can still be a valuable resource for the township.

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